Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 01610 160954Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 ACDA-12 IGA-02 L-03 MCE-00 /065 W
----------038728 170224Z /64
R 160822Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5118
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
DA WASHDC
CDR DARCOM ALEX VA
DCDR USASAC NCAD PA
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 1610

FOR: DSAA/ASD-ISA
DA-DALO-ILP
USCINCEUR-ECJ4/7

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, JO, IR
SUBJECT: REBUILD BY IRAN OF JORDANIAN M48 TANKS

REF: A. THERAN 01417
B. 77 STATE 207984 (DTG 310241Z AUG 77)

1. THIS MSG PROVIDES EMBASSY AMMAN COMMENTS ON THE REQUEST FOR A LETTER OF OFFER SUBMITTED BY TEHRAN 01417 FOR THE PURCHASE OF CONVERSION KITS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN (GOI) TO MODERNIZE AND UPGRADE JORDANIAN M48/M48A1 TANKS.

2. WE RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED SALE WHICH IS INTENDED FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF OLD U.S. EQUIPMENT ALREADY IN THE JORDAN ARMY INVENTORY. THE NUMBER OF TANKS INVOLVED IS MODEST, THE EQUIPMENT PROPOSED FOR SALE IS NOT NEW TO THE AREA, IT WILL NOT DISTURB
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PAGE 02 AMMAN 01610 160954Z

THE ARMS BALANCE OF THE AREA, AND IT WILL PROVIDE JORDAN WITH AN IMPROVED DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY.

3. APPROPRIATE COMMENTS REQUIRED BY PARA 5E OF REFERENCE B FOLLOW:
A. JORDAN REQUIRES THE REBUILD OF ITS M48 TANKS IN ORDER TO SIMPLIFY TRAINING, MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICS. REPLACEMENT

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

OF THE 90MM GUN NOW IN THE M48'S WITH THE 105 MM GUN WILL PERMIT THE JAF TO STANDARDIZE ITS TANK AMMUNITION, AS WELL AS PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RANGE AND FIREPOWER FOR ITS ARMOR.

B. THE PROPOSED SALE, IF CONSUMMATED, WOULD INCREASE THE COMBAT CAPABILITY OF THOSE JORDAN ARMY UNITS WITH M48 TANKS. THE INCREASED COMBAT CAPABILITY WOULD BE VERY GRADUAL AND OVER A PERIOD OF AT LEAST TWO YEARS, ONCE RETROFITTING BEGAN. THE OVERALL IMPACT OF THIS AS RELATED TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WOULD BE MINIMAL BECAUSE TANKS OF THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES ARE ALREADY EQUIPPED WITH GUNS OF 105MM OR LARGER CALIBER.

C. THE JORDAN ARMY CAN OPERATE AND MAINTAIN THE REBUILD M48 TANKS. IT ALREADY HAS US M60 TANKS WHICH HAVE 105MM GUNS. RETROFIT OF THE M48'S SHOULD SIMPLIFY THE PROBLEM OF OPERATING AND MAINTAINING THESE TANKS. NO ADDITIONAL OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE AMERICAN PERSONNEL SHOULD BE REQUIRED FOR SUPPORT OF THE MODIFIED TANKS.

D. GOJ HAS NOT REQUESTED USG FINANCING. WE ARE INFORMED THAT THE ENTIRE PROJECT IS TO BE FINANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.

E. THE SALE SHOULD HAVE NO RECOGNIZABLE IMPACT ON THE JORDANIAN ECONOMY AS A WHOLE.

F. OUR VIEW IS THAT THE SALE DOES NOT VIOLATE THE INTENT OR
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SPIRIT OF THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY. NO SENSITIVE EQUIPMENT IS INVOLVED, THE SALE WILL BE AT NO COST, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, TO THE GOJ, AND THE IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL ARMS BALANCE WILL BE NEGLIGIBLE. DEPARTMENT MAY BE IN A BETTER POSITION THAN WE TO EVALUATE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED SALE TO PRESIDENT'S ARMS TRANSFER POLICY.

4. ALTHOUGH WE SEE NO MENTION OF DIESEL ENGINES IN THE REQUEST FOR LOA, WE ARE INFORMED THAT DIESELIZATION OF THE M-48'S IS TO BE PART OF THE MODERNIZATION THAT GOI HAS UNDERTAKEN TO PERFORM. ASSUME THAT THE DIESEL ENGINES ARE NOT SUBJECT TO SAME SUPPLY CONSTRAINTS AS THE ARMAMENT.
PICKERING

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20 Mar 2014
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